

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07
INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 OMB-01 CU-02 MCT-01
SY-05 AID-05 EUR-12 ACDA-07 PC-01 SCA-01 DODE-00
PM-04 H-01 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 DHA-02 /105 W
-----041416Z 072506 /46

P R 041230Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1893
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
USSOUTHCOM
ZNE/AMCONSUL CALI
AMCONSUL BARRANQUILLA
AMCONSUL MEDELLIN

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PINS, ELAB
SUBJECT: THE WEEK IN COLOMBIA

1. SUMMARY. THE ALVARISTA WING OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY TOOK STEPS TO REAFFIRM ITS INDEPENDENCE WHILE REMAINING AS AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE COALITION GOVERNMENT. LABOR UNREST CONTINUED AS THE HIGH RATE OF INFLATION AND A LABOR COURT DECISION PROMPTED WORKER DISSATISFACTION. STUDENT PROTESTS, SEVERAL OF THEM VIOLENT, AFFECTED A NUMBER OF CITIES.

2. POLITICAL SCENE COFFUSED BY ALVARISTA MOVES. THE ALVARISTA WING OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY CONTINUED TO MOVE TOWARDS A MORE SEPARATE STANCE FROM THE LOPEZ GOVERNMENT. WHILE MAINTAINING ITS RIGHT TO CONTINUE ASN AN ACTIVE MEMBER IN THE REMAIN-
ING MONTHS OF THE ADMINISTRATION. IN A RADIO INTERVIEW
MAY 28, ALVARA GOMEZ HURTADO, THE LEADER OF THE ALVARISTAS,
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NOTED THAT HIS FOLLOWERS WOULD CONTINUE THEIR COLLABORATION WITH THE LOPEZ GOVERNMENT IN ORDER TO PRESERVE COLOMBIA'S DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS, AND TO COMPLY WITH CONSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS, BUT THAT THEY WOULD RESERVE THE RIGHT TO VOICE THEIR DIFFERING VIEWS ON GOVERNMENT POLICIES, ES-
PECIALLY ECONOMIC MEASURES, AND WOULD
CONTINUE TO WORK FOR A CONSERVATIVE PARTY VICTORY IN THE

1978 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. GOMEZ NOTED THAT HE SUPPORTS THE SEPARATION OF THE 1978 ELECTIONS, BUT BELIEVES THE CONGRESSIONAL VOTE ON THIS ISSUE SHOULD REQUIRE A TWO/THIRDS MAJORITY TO PASS, AND NOT THE SIMPLE MAJORITY AS IS NOW BEING ARGUED BY THE LIBERAL PARTY.

GOMEZ HAS TOLD HIS FOLLOWERS THAT THEY ARE FREE TO VOICE THEIR CONSCIENCE WHEN THE ISSUE COMES TO A FORMAL VOTE. THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE SEPARATION OF ELECTIONS WILL REQUIRE A MAJORITY VOTE HAS DOMINATED POLITICAL DEBATE THE PAST TWO WEEKS, WITH ALL ELEMENTS OF THE LIBERAL PARTY RECOGNIZING THAT A TWO/THIRDS VOTE WOULD REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE CONSERVATIVE PARTY SUPPORT. THIS WOULD PUT THE LIBERAL PARTY'S AGREEMENT SAN CARLOS IN PERIL. EX-PRESIDENT CARLOS LLERAS HAS CALLED FOR A MEETING NEXT WEEK OF THE THREE LIBERAL PARTY PRESIDENTIAL PRECANDIDATES TO DISCUSS THIS THREAT TO THE AGREEMENT.

3. LABOR UNREST CONTINUES. THE STRIKE BY PUBLIC EMPLOYEES IN BUCARAMANGA WAS FINALLY SETTLED MAY 31, JUST HOURS BEFORE A VENERAL STRIKE BY OTHER WORKERS IN SANTANDER DEPARTMENT WAS TO TAKE PLACE, AND AFTER SOME 3,000 STRIKERS TOOK REFUGE IN A CHURCH, SUPPOSEDLY TO AVOID POLICE AND MILITARY MISTREATMENT. DESPITE THE CONCLUSION OF THIS DISPUTE, SPORADIC LABOR UNREST CONTINUED AROUND THE COUNTRY AS UNIONS FACE RANK AND FILE DISSATISFACTION OVER THE EFFECTS OF INFLATION. THE TWO DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONFEDERATIONS HAVE PLACED THEIR AFFILIATES ON A "STATE OF ALERT", WITH THE UNION OF COLOMBIAN WORKERS (UTC) ANNOUNCING THAT IT WILL HOLD A NATIONAL MEETING JULY 22

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AND 23 TO DISCUSS THE POSSIBILITY OF A NATIONAL WORK STOPPAGE. THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED NATIONAL CONFEDERATION ALSO PLANS A MEETING IN MID-JUNE TO DISCUSS THE SAME SUBJECT. THE NATION'S TEACHERS NOW PLAN TO HOLD A NATIONAL STRIKE ON JUNE 8, TO PROTEST INFLATION AND TO SHOW SOLIDARITY WITH A STUDENT DEMONSTRATION SCHEDULED FOR THE SAME DAY.

4. STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS INCREASE THROUGHOUT COUNTRY. A NUMBER OF VIOLENT DEMONSTRATIONS TOOK PLACE AS STUDENTS AND PROFESSORS PROTESTED THE LACK OF GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION. POLICE AND STUDENTS CLASHED IN IBAGUE, PUERTO BERRIO, M CALI, BARRANQUILLA, AND MANIZALES, WHILE STUDENTS IN MEDELLIN CONDUCTED A PEACEFUL STREET DEMONSTRATION. ALTHOUGH THE REASONS FOR PROTEST VARIED, AN IMPORTANT FACTOR WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S LONG DELAY IN PAYING SOME TEACHER SALARIES. IN BOGOTA, THERE WAS NO STUDENT VIOLENCE THIS WEEK. A NEW RECTOR, EMILIO ALJURE, WAS APPOINTED BY THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, BUT THE BOGOTA CAMPUS WILL REMAIN CLOSED AT LEAST UNTIL JULY AS UNIVERSITY OFFICIALS CONTINUE

TO TRY TO DEVELOP A PLAN TO PROTECT PUBLIC ORDER WHEN THE
CAMPUS IS REOPENED.
DREXLER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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